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The Quarterly Review of Public Relations

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APRIL 1958

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**EDITOR** HOWARD P. HUDSON

**ASSOCIATE EDITORS**

CHARLES D. BROWN
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EDWIN C. KEPLER

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**ADVERTISING MANAGER**

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MALCOLM SEMPLE

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE AND MANUSCRIPTS be addressed to the Editor, 1606 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W. ington 9, D. C.

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BOOKS INTENDED FOR REVIEW should be addressed to Don Col and Employee Relations, General Electric Co., 570 Lexington A York 22, N. Y.

LESSONS FROM THE PAST . . .

# *SAMUEL ADAMS*

## *Master Propagandist*

*by* EDWIN C. KEPLER

IT WOULD be grossly inaccurate to identify Samuel Adams as a prototype of the modern public relations man. He was a revolutionary propagandist. He employed methods, including the falsification of evidence and the incitation of mobs, that could not be condoned today. But even within the bounds of legitimate persuasion and publicity, he achieved skills that perhaps few present practitioners could match.

A ne'er-do-well in personal fortune most of his life, stern-visaged, gray-haired and palsied before he was fifty (he was fifty-four when he signed the Declaration of Independence), he worked assiduously for more than a quarter of a century to arouse a will for democracy in the colonies. His life's work began in 1748 with the founding of *The Public Advertiser,* a weekly magazine of liberal politics. Before his work was done, he was to employ with a master's touch almost every technique known to modern public relations.

Fundamentally, he was a communications specialist. He presented, analyzed, and interpreted the issues of his day in a manner that compelled attention and evoked response. He counseled others in his methods. Once from Philadelphia he wrote to his friends back in Boston:

"Your presses have been too long silent. What were your Committees of Correspondence about? I hear nothing of circular Letters—of Joynt Committees as in MS. Such Methods have in times past raised the Spirts of the people—drawn off their Attention from picking up Pins, & directed their Views to great Objects."

### *A Busy Writer, Adept at Slanting*

Adams himself was a prolific writer. No pen in America was as consistently busy as his. Fortunate in having the unwitting cooperation of a

short-sighted British Parliament, he never lacked for an issue, either real or concocted.

He knew, as modern public relations men have again discovered, that the "general public" is a composite of numerous publics, and he was adept at "slanting" his appeals to the particular group he addressed. His letters to the British Parliament, written in his capacity as clerk of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, were thoughtfully worded documents reflecting forceful logic and scholarly attainments. To Lord Camden he wrote:

"If it is an essential unalterable right in nature, ingrafted into the British Constitution as a fundamental law, and ever held sacred and irrevocable by the subjects within the realm, and that what is a man's own is absolutely his own, and that no man hath a right to take it from him without his consent; may not the subjects of this province, with a decent firmness, which has always distinguished the happy subjects of Britain, plead and maintain this natural constitutional right?"

His letters to his compatriots were, as the occasion demanded, passionate missives loaded with emotional appeals, or sage epistles of Socratic wisdom. His pen could sooth and it could sting. Of a series of articles he wrote to offset rumors that he had engineered the Boston Massacre, a Tory said: "And bitter reading they were, for they were wrote with a Pen dipped in the Gall of Asps."

### *Stance, Caution, and the Third Party Technique*

He flooded the newspapers with articles written under many pseudonyms, making shrewd appeals to self-interest, pride, justice, fear and the many other touchstones to human nature, including, it must be added, religious prejudice. He had his own refinement of the "third party technique." He would put forth an idea under one pen name, deny it under another, reassert it under the first, re-examine its merits under the second, and finally end up agreeing with himself that it was a splendid idea after all. As the critic Vernon Louis Parrington said:

". . . he created like Falstaff a host of patriots out of a single Bostonian in brown homespun, making it appear that many were troubled over evils that were visible only to him."[1]

Sam Adams fully understood the importance of what, in the parlance of public relations, is sometimes referred to as "stance." He never posed as a visionary leading the way to Utopia; instead, his position was that he wished to restore the independence, simple dignity and moral ways of the past.

Because of the vigor of his writing, historians have sometimes re-

[1] Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents* in American Thought, p. 242

garded him as a hothead. He was, in fact, exactly the opposite. Ever cautious, his practice was to take a position slightly in advance of public opinion and then wait, in some instances for years, for his countrymen to catch up. His first attacks were stated as the protests of a loyal subject of Britain and were based on the constitutional rights of Englishmen. Later he claimed loyalty to the King, but denied the authority of Parliament. Finally he disclaimed loyalty to both the King and Parliament and asserted the "natural right" of the colonies to be free. The evolution took more than twenty years.

What did his adversaries think of this Harvard graduate (Class of 1740) who dressed in homespun and was not displeased to hear himself described as "the last Puritan?" The Rev. Jacob Duché, Rector of Christ Church in Philadelphia, one time chaplain of the Continental Congress but later a Loyalist, wrote in a letter to General George Washington that, except possibly for John Hancock, the New England provinces furnished Congress with no gentlemen, but "bankrupts, attorneys, and men of desperate fortunes,"[2] thereby giving posterity a commentary on the status of the legal profession in that day, if not specifically on Congressman Sam Adams.

Another enemy was more direct. Paul Wentworth, Loyalist and British secret agent, made this report on Samuel Adams:

"An unprincipled man in morals; steady to a point in his politics. Independency was his constant prayer. Of great talents, particularly adapted to the management of popular assemblies. Fertile in expedients, dexterous in applying them. Subtle and unaffected, he can embrace an advantage or sacrifice it to the wishes of an indifferent friend. Cool in deliberation, impetuous in execution. His similes are bold and striking; his arguments naturally deduced, close yet seem familiar. His conclusions are forcibly drawn and his language though not always chaste is often beautiful. He is diffuse both in speaking and writing, yet he does both with great energy and persuasion. He has acquired these talents by dint of labour. Twenty years ago he was not distinguished from the crowd of very middling characters."[3]

### *A Well-Rounded Propagandist, Included "Overt Act" Device*

As is true of the well-rounded public relations man today, Sam Adams had many tools in his kit. He staged parades, feasts, and mass meetings. He caused the date of the Boston Massacre to become an annual celebration and ghost wrote speeches for others to deliver on its observance. He distributed songs, cartoons and posters. He organized com-

[2] Carl Van Doren *Secret History of the American Revolution*, p. 41.
[3] *Ibid., p. 77.*

mittees of correspondence in New England, thus setting up his own communications network for his circular letters. To help give his activities the religious and moral flavor he desired, he organized singing clubs in Boston churches.

Sam Adams was also a capable recruiter of able young men to the patriot cause. He brought in wealthy young John Hancock, who footed the bills for his propaganda, and John Adams, a second cousin from the country, who later developed abilities as a statesman and became the second President of the United States. He recruited clergymen, merchants, mechanics, doctors, loafers, yeomen, and others of diverse backgrounds and welded them into tightly united groups. In this work, too, he spent many years.

Nothing demonstrated his mastery of the propagandist's art more clearly than the skill and care with which he employed the technique now known as the overt act. No one understood better than he that if a picture is worth a thousand words, a well-plannd overt act which dramatizes and crystalizes an idea in the public mind is worth easily a thousand pictures. As a matter of fact, "publicity" on his most brilliant effort—the Boston Tea Party—is still running. The modern practitioner will find few examples that he can study with more profit than this.

***Don't Take Tea and See***

When, to quiet the colonists in 1770, the British Parliament repealed the duties on paper, glass, and painter's colors, but retained, as a gesture of its authority, the duty on tea, Sam Adams set himself to the task of killing Britain's tea trade in New England. It was the revenue from tea, he pointed out to his countrymen, that permitted the King to pay colonial governors and judges directly, thus making them independent of local legislatures.

Adam's task was formidable. Though he and other propagandists warned that tea weakened the "tone of the stomach, and therefore of the whole system, inducing tremors and spasmodic affections," New Englanders persisted in the tea drinking habit.

Patriotically, many patronized their local smugglers of Dutch tea, thus denying revenue to the British. But British tea was cheaper than that offered by the smugglers (it was cheaper in America than in London), and Adams recognized it as a serious threat to the patriots' principal argument: no taxation without representation.

By 1773 popular resistance to British tea had built up to a point that open defiance was possible. Tea ships arrived in Charlestown, and

the tea was locked in warehouses to remain unsold. Tea ships arrived at Philadelphia; organized Sons of Liberty prevented them from entering the harbor. In doing this, they forestalled the law which required that custom duties be paid before a ship could be cleared to leave port with its dutiable cargo still aboard.

Sam Adams warned that any ships bringing tea to Boston would have to return to England without unloading and with no payment of duties. Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson could not, by law, give the ships clearance to leave the harbor under those circumstances. Furthermore, if the law was disobeyed, the King could seize the ships in England and their owners, Hutchinson's friends, would be ruined.

When the tea ships were sighted, the Governor sought to prevent a showdown by ordering them to drop anchor at Castle Island, a British stronghold just outside of Boston harbor. He intended of his own accord to follow the lead of the patriots in Philadelphia: to order the ships to return before they entered the harbor, and in that way circumvent the law.

But Adams had other ideas. His Liberty Boys ordered the ships' captains to bring their ships to the Boston wharves on pain of being tarred and feathered. Always prudent, he stationed twenty-five trusted compatriots, armed with rifles, on the wharves to see that the tea remained aboard unmolested.

***A Call for Group Participation***

Knowing the value of what is today called "group participation," he sent word through the countryside for patriotic yeomen to hurry to Boston to help meet the crisis.

And he plastered the town with an urgent poster:

> Friends! Bretheren! Countrymen! That worst of Plagues, the detested tea shipped for this port by the East India Company, is now arrived in the Harbour; the hour of destruction, or manly opposition to the mechanitions of Tyranny, stares you in the Face; every Friend to his country, to Himself, and to Posterity, is now called upon to meet at Fanueil Hall, at nine o'clock this day, at which time the bells will ring to make united and successful resistance to this last, worst and most destructive measure of Administration. Nov. 29, 1773.

Fanueil Hall proved too small for the crowds that assembled, and the meetings were held in Old South Meetinghouse. The oratory was wild, and the demands of the crowds for action mounted to a feverish pitch. But Sam Adams kept a tight lid on the boiling pot. He had a good sense of timing, and he did not intend to lose any of the propaganda value of the situation by premature action.

Demands were sent to Hutchinson that he order the ships to return to Britain with their cargoes of tea. But he, now that the ships were actually in the harbor, insisted that the duty on the tea must be paid. He had no other choice. Adams, long his avowed enemy, had him in a box.

***A Matter of Timing***

The deadline for action was December 17. On that date, if the duties remained unpaid, custom officers would take charge of the tea and transport it to Castle Island, from whence, as Adams feared, it might be smuggled to country markets.

On December 16 one of the owners of the tea ships was forced to make a final appeal to the Governor for permission to send the tea back to England without payment of duties. It was six o'clock in the evening, when the merchant returned to Old South with the word that Hutchinson had again said no.

Samuel Adams stood up before the expectant patriots and solemnly declared:

"This meeting can do no more to save the country."

His words were greeted with a wild war whoop, for even before he spoke, a group of his "Mohawks," made up to resemble Indians, had prepared for their part of the act. Several hundred of them, followed by a mob of spectators, rushed to the ships and in a matter of minutes dumped 342 cases of tea into the harbor.

The Boston Tea Party was just what Sam Adams planned that it should be—an overt act that dramatized in an unmistakable manner the fact that the colonists, their patience exhausted, felt themselves ready for a test of strength with the British. In conception and execution, it was the work of a master. Sixteen months later the American Revolution began.

During the early days of the war, Sam Adams was the most famous man in America. Thomas Jefferson said he was "truly the Man of the Revolution," and Lord North sneered at the patriots as "Sam Adams' crew." When John Adams undertook a mission to France in 1778, he was mistaken for Sam and celebrated as "the famous Adams."

With the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Sam Adams' work was done. He was a revolutionary propagandist, one of the most competent the world has ever known. But now the country no longer needed revolutionists; it needed statesmen.

Sam Adams proved to be a poor statesman. He remained on the

scene for another quarter of a century, serving with no marked distinction in Congress and as Governor of Massachusetts. By his distrust of the Constitution, his fights with the Federalists, and his espousal of Jacobinic principles after the abuses of the French Revolution made those principles unpopular, he lost his influence and injured his standing as a patriot.

The esteem he lost has never been returned to him. Perhaps an oversight is responsible; or perhaps Americans are reluctant to make a hero of a propagandist, no matter how great his service. Parrington stated the case for him with these words: "No cause goes forward without its leaders, and democratic America owes Samuel Adams a debt which it has too grudgingly acknowledged." In our time, a period when communications are appreciated as never before, it would seem appropriate to give Samuel Adams his due. ●

* * *

### *SPUTNIKS AND PR*

". . . Someday I am sure that Sputnik will be given credit for crystallizing one of the classic case histories of all time to show the value and importance of giving considered thought to public opinion and public relations in the conduct of life—or perhaps it will be used as the classic example of neglect of public relations and of the shock and loss of national and international prestige that can ensue as a result of such neglect.

"I suppose there has never been a public relations man who has not had to continue throughout his career to justify his profession to skeptics and to explain what public relations is and why. It seems a never-ending process, this educational effort, but encouraging progress has been made in the past 20 years, and Sputnik can well speed up this progress if public relations men will interpret and capitalize on the lesson it has taught the world.

"It is almost unanimous among our best thinkers of the day that there is such a thing as public opinion. The unanimity stops there, however, and from that point on there are as many ideas as there are observers, as to the ramifications and definitions of public opinion. But that one unanimous point—that there is such a thing as public opinion or a collection of many majority and minority opinions in the mass that somehow together constitute an overall public opinion—that one point of agreement is enough for the public relations man.

"The public relations man then goes on in various way to affect public opinion by taking a direct, purposeful course of action. Of course, any man in any walk of life can influence that part of the public he contacts, purposefully or unintentionally. Many men in public life follow good public relations practice and do not need public relations specialists. But life is becoming so complex that the trend toward public relations specialists is a 'must.' Industry has shown a rapidly increasing recognition of the value of good public relations. Government, however, is trailing so far behind in this recognition that we have an incredible case like Sputnik, in which the Administration deliberately permitted the Russians to take the initiative and achieve a world-wide propaganda ten-strike, which, in the words of one outstanding writer, 'put the free world in a state of shock for a matter of days and weeks.' The writer, incidentally, was an eminent professor and educator—not a public relations man . . .

"If the public relations profession doesn't make the most of Sputnik then it is not comprised of the same caliber of men who have brought the profession to the point of respect and importance it enjoys today."

—Robert H. Wood
*Vice President, American Aviation Publications. Washington, D. C.*
*Meeting of Washington Chapter, APRA, February 12, 1958.*

# *The Editors' Page*

**pr** We have resisted writing a statement of purpose until now. Like the legendary man challenged to drink a two quart flagon of ale at one draught, we preferred to try it first before performing in public. So, since October 1955, we have let **pr** speak for itself.

This being the eleventh issue, nothing we can say will alter what we have already done. But our readers may be interested to know what we are trying to accomplish, and something about our viewpoint.

First, we are enthusiastic about public relations and its future. It is our conviction that public relations will have an increasingly important role in our world of today and tomorrow. Our free society may face its ultimate test in the ability of citizens to obtain, comprehend, evaluate, and act upon complex new information. Hence there is an urgency to develop the interpretative and communications skills of public relations men and women.

It is our belief that our day to day progress will be made through periodicals like this one. Our pages are open to those who wish to express various points of view on basic public relations issues. Indeed, we plan an orderly approach to these basic issues so that our readers will have the evidence laid before them, the better to obtain considered judgments on these great questions.

As a quarterly we omit the immediate, which is available elsewhere, and attempt to concentrate on the fundamental and, we hope, the timeless. Thus we review regularly for you the books and other periodical literature, relating them in such a way that they provide greater understanding of the field; summarize the lessons to be derived from the professional journals in the social sciences, a bridge building approach; conduct a forum for the exchange of views about past articles; offer analyses of case studies from the APRA Awards Competition; and report on significant research.

We recognize that in contrast to the older professions, our periodical literature is still sparse, in quantity and quality. **pr** was founded in the belief that the expanding field of public relations needed a quarterly in addition to the weekly and monthly which antedate us in this country. We believe that strong periodicals, both here and abroad, are essential to the sound growth of our field—and that professional people have an obligation to use them to share their experiences with each other.

For we consider it basic that, despite all of the new methods of communication, the printed word remains the mark of a profession.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETS . . .

# *PR* BUILDS *U.S. Sales and Goodwill*

*by* JOE JONES

A DECADE ago, in an article in *Export Trade & Shipper,* I reported the practical benefits to U. S. companies which at that time had "discovered" the values of planned public relations in international markets.

Among the key objectives in overseas PR programs the article pointed out are "consumer acceptance and goodwill and the recognition by foreign governments of the contributions of the company's products to their national economies—with consequent easing of import restrictions and allocations of dollar exchange."

During these years, there have been innumerable examples of companies achieving those goals. Today, the objectives in the international PR program remain the same. But, conditions are changing.

Today, export-minded businessmen are taking more than an academic interest in international public relations—and with good reason.

Since 1946, United States investments in Latin America alone have rocketed in book value from $3 billion to $7 billion, and market value is far greater. Production of U. S. companies in these countries exceeds $5 billion.[1]

This market is by no means the exclusive territory of United States industry. Other supplier nations, particularly Germany, France, Belgium and Japan have increased competition in both direct selling and through tremendous foreign investments of their own.

Traders from behind the Iron Curtain are very active in Latin America, signing more and more agreements. Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania will supply Argentina with heavy industrial equipment, paying for earlier imports of Argentine beef and hides. Brazil is reported consid-

[1] *Time Magazine, Jan. 6, 1958.*

ering a $400 million Soviet trade agreement that would ease her coffee surplus.[2]

These wholehearted efforts by other supplier nations to capture overseas markets have reached the point where United States companies already established there are feeling the pressure of mounting competition.

United States industry faces another problem in Latin America—there's economic trouble south of the border. Purchases of both machinery and consumer goods are being cut. According to well informed estimates, trade will probably fall by 10 percent to less than $4 billion.[3]

### *Anti-American Propaganda*

Coupled with these problems, American industry is faced with a worldwide spread of infectious anti-American propaganda which depicts the American business man as a whip-lashing exploiter.

American industry can meet this challenge head-on—through the wider use of international public relations. Advertising has its place, but fuller use of well-organized public relations programs is urgently needed.

The pages of newspapers in the United States are heavy with news created by the public relations departments of industrial or commercial interests. It is a conservative guess that less than one percent of this volume reaches the potential, interested overseas audience. The news services are not geared to handle the great volume of business news that might be published abroad. And, frankly, why should they promote your company's commercial interests abroad?

### *Specialized News Services*

Some public relations firms operate specialized news services which supply foreign editors with news about clients. Editors rely on them for news the wire services do not carry. These include such well received services—exclusively for overseas distribution—as American News Service, Export News Service, Brazilian News Service, Paxpress and the syndicated column, "Modern Science: Our Magic Carpet."

These services accomplish for clients what no amount of paid advertising can hope to achieve—stimulation of sales and company good-will simultaneously.

A story about advertised products or services published in the news section is bound to grasp your attention and hold it. Well-planned and professionally-prepared publicity has a far greater ring of truth than an "ad" that has been bought and paid for by the source it came from. And, incidentally, publicity programs in foreign markets cost far less than advertising programs for much more space.

[2] *Ibid., March 3, 1958.*

[3] *Ibid., February 10, 1958.*

This valuable public relations tool builds sales and good-will in countless ways; all the way from news releases to direct contact with top government officials of foreign countries.

A drug manufacturer wanted to introduce a product in a major Latin American market but before it could be put on the market the firm had to obtain governmental price approval. Local legal counsel, after months of study, told them that it was not an opportune time politically to go into that market. They feared a turndown on price application. They pointed to the general public and press antagonism toward American drug companies due to what was regarded as unduly high prices for drug products in that country.

***PR Opens The Market***

The manufacturer's international public relations agency swung the market open to them through direct contact with the highest authority. The agency's president, active in many Latin American trade associations including the country concerned, went to the Minister of Economy and, face to face, explained the advantages of such a move. It was pointed out that approval would benefit that nation's economy through increased advertising revenue; more jobs through packaging and eventual production there, as well as the benefits of the product itself. The Minister agreed and took favorable action. No publicity was needed in this instance.

Many United States firms have reached their goals in the international field through public relations programs. International public relations programs have proven of great value to such progressive companies as E. R. Squibb & Sons; Sears Roebuck; International General Electric; Remington Rand; Merck Sharp & Dohme; Bristol Myers; Lockheed Corporation; Panagra; Boeing; Braniff International Airways and others. These companies enjoy vast coverage in the overseas press.

Remington Rand has a long established policy for conducting its overseas business, operating on the theory that the company is a citizen of each country in which it locates branches. As a citizen the company feels that it has a stake in the national economy of that particular country.

This forward looking public relations program has paid dividends. The company has built up over the years an investment with governments and peoples abroad which cannot be measured in dollars and cents—an investment in official, consumer and employee goodwill which will directly and indirectly influence future sales and expansion.

The establishment of partnerships with foreign firms and lending technical assistance to foreign industry is sound public relations policy.

Firms of other nations are eager to form such relationships since governments of these nations will naturally protect those firms and force non-local producers out. Incidentally, private enterprise was lending technical assistance to foreign industry long before the government's Point Four program.

***American Cyanamid Experience***

In 1945, American Cyanamid considered that it was good judgment to establish a modern dyestuff and drug industry in southeast Asia, in association with local capital. A pilot plant for the manufacture of dyes and drugs was built about 150 miles from Bombay, India, in cooperation with Kasturbhai Lalbhai, a successful Indian industrialist. As the parent organization of Lederle Laboratories and Calco Chemical Company. American Cyanamid had forty years of experience to offer the new India enterprise. It has only ten percent investment in the venture— Atul Products, Ltd.,—and it has no share in its management. It did, however, provide full technical assistance in the building of the plant and will continue to aid in technical matters for the duration of its agreement with the India operators.

To forestall any charges that American capital was exploiting India's lack of adequate and modern dyes and drugs, American Cyanamid, through public relations action, informed the public of its position in the project. News releases were only one of many factors which accomplished this objective.

***New Plant Openings***

Public relations can smooth the path for new plant openings. Many times local authorities demand immediate production before they allow a plant to operate. This stumbling block can be removed by a good public relations counsel who is familiar with the area and its people. Through his contacts and experience he will be able, in many cases, to explain to the local authorities, satisfaction the many problems involved, and bring about their acceptance of the principle of gradual production.

The creation of goodwill through social and community contributions can best be handled by public relations experts who deal exclusively with the area involved. An outright monetary contribution to a local community project will bring the company's name to public attention as one of the contributors. But, a public relations counsel familiar with the area will find ways to make it front page news.

Should a local museum or other institution be planned, the public

relations counsel may find that a first-aid room has not been contracted for because of a lack of funds. The company may find itself with a top news story by contributing equipment and supplies for the first-aid room rather than a contribution to the general fund of the project. They may even acknowledge the gift by putting up a plaque on the wall of such a room with the name of the company engraved on it. Such a visual reminder of the company's generosity would be a constant source of goodwill since the company would be associated with social progress for years.

These examples of public relations at work are but a few of the thousands of ways in which it can build company preference.

The most successful overseas publicity programs are usually those where the export manager is himself public relations minded. He should help make news by arranging for the appropriate handling of business news stories such as:

1. Stories of new products or product developments.
2. Announcements of appointments of overseas managers, distributors and dealers.
3. Stories of establishment of expansion of plant and offices abroad.
4. Press interviews at international headquarters, with visiting government officials and business leaders from abroad. Most overseas visitors—far from home—make good news copy for editors in their own countries. They travel thousands of miles to visit the United States and experience has shown that their homeland newspapers print news about their activities here.
5. When company officials travel abroad, advance coverage in leading overseas dailies timed by news wire to the days of their arrivals in different cities anywhere in the world.
6. When company officials return to the United States, news stories about their favorable observations on economic conditions in countries visited to be dispatched to newspapers in those countries.
7. Attracting trade and public interest in company participation in international trade fairs and exhibitions.
8. "Ghostwriting" of feature articles for international trade and financial publications—establishing the chief executive of international division as "export spokesman for our industry and reflecting company's leadership in its field."
9. Arranging press conferences both at home and in other countries.
10. Assisting foreign correspondents and editors visiting the United States to develop feature articles about company and its products.

11. Cooperation with Municipal, State and Federal Agencies concerned with international events—such as U. S. Department of State Public Affairs and Information Division; U. S. Information Agency; Organization of American States; Office of Commissioner of Commerce & Public Events of City of New York; International Business Advisory Council, etc.
12. Cooperation with Consul Generals, United Nations Ambassadors and Foreign Government Agencies.
13. When in company interest, participation in special events sponsored by Foreign Chambers of Commerce such as American Brazilian Association; Mexican Chamber of Commerce in the U. S.; Latin American Chamber of Commerce; Pan American Society; National Foreign Trade Council, and others.
14. Active participation in programs of Overseas Press Club, Foreign Correspondents Association and closer association with their members representing leading correspondents of world newspapers, magazines and radio stations.
15. Cooperation with company's domestic publicity and public relations agency—developing programs of mutual interest—adapting company's U. S. stories for abroad and company's foreign stories for use in U. S.

The list could be extended considerably. However, experience seems to indicate that rather than adhering to a rigid set of rules and procedures it is advisable in the international field to have a flexible program—one in which the publicity and public relations emphasis can be shifted from time to time—and from market to market—to take advantage of rapidly changing patterns and conditions in world trade.

***Other Methods***

In organizing a program of your own, alert all your associates and employees through bulletin, house organ, staff talks, etc. Explain to them that increased publicity and improved public relations for the company abroad will be reflected in increased sales, meaning better profits and wages, production stability and job security.

Assign one executive who has a natural appreciation of news values to serve as a control and collections center to which all news should be relayed. If you have this set-up established for domestic publicity, just add export news to the agenda.

The key points in an organization where export news may develop

are: export department; overseas branches; distributors and dealers; domestic sales department; top management; production department; product design and engineering department; shipping department; advertising and sales promotion departments.

Each division head should be reminded at scheduled intervals of the urgency of reporting any facts of events having even a hint of news value.

A guide to the kinds of news required should be printed and distributed and a bulletin prepared for easy reference. Each news report should cover the following:

1. The subject or name of the event or development.
2. The purpose and objective—reason why.
3. When it occurred.
4. Where—precise location with number and street address, if required.
5. Who were the principals involved; full name and initials (be sure names are spelled correctly), and in case of persons from other lands, their home city and nation and business affiliations.
6. How the event, celebration or announcement was put into effect.
7. What special or unexpected occurrence arose during the event.

It should be emphasized that you are not looking for literary masterpieces, but factual complete reporting of the event or incident. Necessary editing should be done by the editorial staff of the international public relations agency. There, for the most part, especially with those operating affiliated news services such as American News Service, Paxpress, Export News Service, Brazilian News Service, and others, these materials are usually prepared by ex-reporters, ex-feature writers and ex-editors, who understand what the papers want to print and what will be of interest to their readers. It is their job to ferret out real news items and work them into interesting, informative stories.

Each week the man assigned by your company should assemble all these stories and check them for accuracy and completeness, then forward them to the agency promptly. Following a normal routine the reports will be processed, those most newsworthy and timely will be rewritten and slanted for a specific overseas audience, translated, assembled with other live news and transmitted by airmail (or press cables when required) to the newspapers, magazines and trade papers abroad.

The budget set for the program is a basic factor in its success or failure. All too often the figure is arbitrarily limited to an inadequate amount. When the program is unable to produce the expected results the

publicity people are held accountable. It's the old story of expecting to satisfy a champagne appetite with a beer bank account. It can't be done!

The publicity budget should be tailor-made to cover the job it was set up to do—build goodwill and produce more profits through increased sales. The overall figure should be set on the basis of the work to be accomplished and its relation to the total budget. All items to be used in the program should be listed, along with up-to-the-minute costs for each. Then total the cost and, allow at least 10 percent of the total for unforeseen requirements.

A company without a well-planned, adequately budgeted public relations program is like a flashlight with weak batteries—it is capable of throwing a beam of light—but the least expensive item, its source of power, needs a boost. ●

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## *PUBLIC RELATIONS DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE*

Public relations for business as organized and carried on in America is winning increasing acceptance in many European countries.

This development is accompanying far-reaching economic changes underway through Europe, one outstanding feature of which being a steadily rising standard of living for the people.

This rise is expected to be greatly accelerated by the Common Market now being created by the parliaments of six European countries—West Germany, France, Holland, Italy, Belgium, and Luxembourg.

Eventually, when the Common Market has materialized, the people and goods of these countries will move freely across national borders just as in the United States.

This will bring into being one large marketing area with a consumer population approximating that of the United States.

Creation of the common European tariff-protected mass market will force an overhauling of many traditional business methods affecting both European companies and American firms doing business in Europe. Many of the latter are beginning to meet the problem by buying into European companies or expanding subsidiary plants already situated in Europe.

European companies accustomed to thinking in terms largely of the economy of a single country will have a whole continent at their doors. They will be presented with many new problems in public relations, merchandising, and advertising. They will have to build and maintain good will over a wider marketing area.

Companies abroad are becoming aware of the fact that most important corporations in the United States have organized public relations programs for building good will and for communicating with employees, customers, stockholders, people in plant communities, government officials, and the general public.

In their study of public relations problems, European companies are seeking to learn more about American techniques and practices in this field. Public relations is receiving special attention because most countries in Europe are far behind America in the development of this activity.

Public relations in Europe has made its largest advances in England, Belgium, and West Germany—the latter country being the scene of Europe's greatest postwar recovery. In Italy, a few leading companies are sponsoring an activity of which the sole purpose is to gain acceptance for the idea of public relations among business firms, the press, government, and the public.

—JOHN W. HILL
*Chairman, Hill and Knowlton, Inc.*

# Further Comment

**RE: "Are Examinations the Path to Professional Status?" by Hal D. Steward, October, 1957.**

**FROM: Eric Williams, Honorary Press Officer, The Institute of Public Relations, London, England**

". . . it would be most desirable to require examinations for membership in a professional public relations association on the part of a junior or associate member. The experiment of the British Institute of Public Relations is setting up an examination system that deserves very careful and sympathetic attention on the part of American public relation societies.

"As for the State taking over the responsibility of examining candidates for the practice of public relations I am completely opposed to any such movement. The practice of public relations involves the gathering and dissemination of information and thus is concerned with freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Any infringement of these freedoms should be met with vigorous resistance on the part of public relations people. It does seem to me that any licensing to practice public relations implies this kind of infringement."

**RE: "Developing Men for Leadership," by J. Stanford Smith, January, 1958**

**FROM: Louis J. Burns, Jr., Vice President, McCormick Associates Inc., Washington, D. C.**

"We are appreciative for Mr. J. Stanford Smith's article on how General Electric recruits and trains public relations people. It is helpful to have such an authoritative presentation on this important subject.

"Mr. Smith, of course, reports policies and practices which are tailored to fit his company's size. In one way the problems of counselling firms like ours are simpler. Fewer people are involved; and their education, while demanding familiarity with client interests, can be concentrated on professional theory and techniques rather than the complex problems of a large company.

"In another way our situation is more complicated. Recruiting for one person at a time, the normal practice, offers practically no margin for error. In addition there is the problem of getting young executives to assume productive responsibilities, as quickly as possible, while they are still involved in a systematic training experience.

"Perhaps these considerations differ only in degree from a large company's problems. Perhaps they reflect more basic differences. Mr. Smith, for example, convincingly puts public relations people in the same category with other businessmen. I wonder if a consulting firm can train leaders in the field without imparting an understanding of the profession's distinct and distinguishing responsibility to the public.

"Perhaps firms like ours should not attempt to recruit and train inexperienced people, but should employ only seasoned practitioners?

"It might be helpful to many of us were **pr**, in some subsequent issue, to develop materials along this line. If it does, I hope the product is as well done as Mr. Smith's."

ETHICS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

# *It's WHAT You Do That COUNTS*

*by* HAL D. STEWARD

GOOD conduct, or ethics if you will, in public relations practice probably receives more thought, more discussion, and more downright concern by practitioners than any other single facet of the profession.

Typical are the comments of J. Carroll Bateman, Director of Public Relations of The Milk Industry Foundation, who, in a speech in 1956 said:

". . . the public relations practitioner is dealing with human beings, and in every instance of the application of a particular principle or technique he should be awesomely aware of the moral implications of his act.

"As professed opinion-molders we face the ethical dilemma of every propagandist: that is to say, in the words of Robert K. Morton: 'The practitioner in propaganda . . . must either forego the use of certain techniques of persuasion which will help him obtain the immediate end in view or violate prevailing moral codes. He must choose between being a less than fully effective technican and a scrupulous human being or an effective technician and a less than scrupulous human being. The pressure of the immediate objective tends to push him toward the first of these alternatives. For when effective mass persuasion is sought, and when "effectiveness" is measured solely by the number of people who can be brought to the desired action or the desired frame of mind, then the choice of techniques of persuasion will be governed by a narrowly technical and amoral criterion.'

"But, if we adhere to the educative role of creators of understanding, this dilemma is resolved. The choice between ethical and unethical techniques become clear-cut and easy to make. Our objective will require us to choose those techniques that enlighten, rather than those that confuse

and deceive. We shall be in a position to provide at least a partial answer to the age-old question, 'What is truth?' because we shall see that the truth is the knowledge that leads to understanding.

"Until the public relations practitioner dedicates himself wholeheartedly to the creation of understanding—the dissemination of enlightenment—he cannot claim to be, in the truest sense, a professional man.

"The worst thing that can happen to us in public relations is to continue to be tagged as manipulators of people or of public opinion. As manipulators we shall not win friends, nor find a lasting place in society. Nor shall we ever be comfortable with ourselves."

***Reactions Abroad***

This thought, discussion and concern is not confined to practitioners in the United States. It is a problem wherever public relations men have made an inroad in countries of the world. For instance, G. L. Hindley, National Chairman of the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa, had this to say at the Second Congress of the Institute in Johannesburg in October 1957:

"The first object of the Institute is to establish and maintain the full professional status and dignity of public relations work among employers and the general public. It is to foster and encourage the close observance of the highest professional conduct by its members, and to prescribe such conduct."

Still another comment to emphasize the international aspect of public relations ethics comes from Dr. H. D. Ahrens, independent German public relations counsel, who wrote in a letter to the author of this article:

"In Germany there exists a small but clever group of individuals, who call themselves 'public relations experts,' but are actually five-percenters whose main interest is selling so-called 'influence.' "

The British too are concerned about ethics in public relations. At the National Conference of the Public Relations Society of America in Philadelphia in November 1957, T. H. Traverse-Healy, Secretary of the International Public Relations Association and one of the leaders of the British Institute of Public Relations, put it this way:

". . . On the other side of this penny, there is an ethical consideration, that is, the ease with which an unscrupulous public relations man can create false impressions overseas about something which is happening thousands of miles away and with only a slight chance of being found out. The eventual harm done by such actions to the profession of public rela-

tions with the press and the public is immeasurable and at the very least is likely to impede the acceptance of public relations in countries where its techniques are less understood and where the unsound practitioner is less easily recognized.

"I would also suggest that an international code of conduct be formulated to govern the overall approach of public relations men everywhere. Such a code could become the spearhead of a program of public relations on the international front."

In the United States there had been considerable discussion of public relations ethics and both of the major national public relations associations have formulated codes of ethics. It seems to be quite evident that the majority of the practitioners in the United States would like to see malpractices eliminated from the profession.

***Time For Action***

There is an unlimited amount of opinion on this subject of public relations ethics. But, this writer believes that the time is now for public relations professionals and their associations to undertake a program to define and denounce reprehensible actions, specifically "malpractices," of public relations.

To embark upon such a program these are some of the questions that will have to be answered: "Is the public relations practitioner an 'officer of the court of public opinion,' so to speak—a trained advocate like the lawyer, ready to espouse either side of an action and duty-bound to defend the criminally-accused? Or is he like the journalist and the educator—pledged to publish the news without bias or to teach the truth without prejudice?"

Many practitioners believe that public relations counsels should represent only those clients whose actions and causes are in the public interest. However, this is not clear-cut because you find yourself faced with defining just what 'in the public interest" is.

Still another roadblock to be faced in considering the issue of ethics has to do with deciding specifically what "malpractice" or "improper conduct" is in the practice of public relations. Where, among the many manifestations of these phases do you begin to deplore, censure or abjure?

When confronted with the matter of ethics it appears that three separate areas must be considered. They are:

1. Intra-professional relationships.
2. Client relationships.
3. Relationships with the public.

The matter of intra-professional relationships must, in the opinion of this writer, include such undesirable practices as piracy of clients or personnel, the derogation of competitors, false representation of services, abuse of professional association membership, and the like.

***Client Relationship***

The area of client relationship would include direct injury to the client resulting from negligence or incompetence on the part of the practitioner. Such things included here would be violation of confidence, the handling of conflicting accounts, misrepresentation of practitioner's services to the client, and so forth.

In the area of relationship with the public the "most obvious misdeed would be the conscious promulgation of falsehood or the misrepresentation of fact in any situation affecting the public interest."[1] This would include false statements about a person or product. Other matters to be included in this area are: political campaign "smears," the subornation of editors, and the issuance of propaganda on behalf of foreign governments whose interest are inimical to those of the United States.

Perhaps the greatest responsibility the public relations practitioner has to the public is that of revealing the source of the information he disseminates. In his book *Publicity,* the late Ivy L. Lee said this on the subject in 1925:

"The essential evil of propaganda is failure to disclose the source of information, and arises when the person who utters it is not willing to stand sponsor for it. Because, to utter a lie to the public is just as futile and will come back to plague you just as quickly as it will to utter a false check."

These three areas of ethical conduct that have been discussed are not original with this writer. Many of them have been written about and discussed for years by other public relations men. The professional associations have also had committees giving much study and consideration to them for the past several years.

***Essence Of The Problem***

Once the areas have been determined the problem then becomes one of how to develop enforceable rules that can be administered by professional public relations associations to prevent "the willful preparation and dissemination of false and misleading information designed to deceive or defraud the public and/or malpractices involving the profession of public relations that are inimical to the public's interest." This then, is the problem.

[1] *1957 Report by PRSA Committee on Standards of Professional Practice.*

In considering the problem of how the professional associations can come up with enforceable rules of conduct it must be taken into consideration that only about 4,000 of the estimated 100,000 persons in public relations activities in the United States belong to the two major national public relations associations.

However, it can be stated with reasonable accuracy that the majority of the acknowledged leaders of the profession of public relations in the United States belong to either one or both of the two national associations. This in itself will enable the associations to continue to take a direct lead in establishing and attempting to maintain high standards of ethical practice on the part of all practitioners in this country.

Although the codes of ethics that have been devised by the major professional associations are certainly an indication of the desire of public relations men to improve standards of professional conduct, they will be nothing more than academic until a method can be found for actively enforcing them.

As things now stand a public relations practitioner can conduct his activities without regard to ethical standards or proper conduct, and the professional associations can do little to curb his activities. This is in contrast to the legal and medical professions where the disbarred lawyer is out of business and so is the doctor who loses his license. These professions can enforce their codes of ethics by legal means.

So as to enforce the proper professional and ethical standards of various professions and occupations the 48 states and the District of Columbia have licensing laws for professions and occupations from abstractors to veterinarians.

***Comparison With Medical Profession***

For example, the Colorado law on the licensing of medical doctors contains a general provision prohibiting "conduct unbecoming to a person licensed to practice medicine or detrimental to the best interests of the public." In general, however, state licensing agencies follow the policy of closely investigating a practitioner's compliance with the law only when a complaint is filed. Complaints may come from fellow practitioners or any citizen. Complaints are checked by inspectors and the problems are either settled informally or formal charges are filed and hearings held.

Some public relations practitioners have suggested that an inter-association Judicial Council be established by APRA and PRSA to hear complaints and render pronouncements on unethical practices. Others think that a more limited objective should first be sought.

A member of a large corporation public relations staff wrote this on the subject in a letter to the writer:

"My own inclination, for what it is worth, would be to shoot for a much more limited objective than a complete inter-association system, including a Judicial Council, for upholding standards. Realistically, I think that so long as the market for public relations services does not discriminate among practitioners on the basis of ethical reputation, any grandiose scheme will collapse. However, a start might be made in the right direction by pumping for a list of 'improper practices,' which, once drawn up, might be used as a basis for subsequent developments along lines similar to those you indicate."

### *A Five Point Program*

This writer suggests these steps by the professional public relations associations to improve and maintain ethical standards of practice:

**1.** Formulate an affirmative declaration of the aims and responsibilities of the associations and their members toward each other, toward the clients and employers of members, and toward the general public.

**2.** Establish a firm list of improper practices and conduct on the part of public relations practitioners that the associations will publicly condemn.

**3.** Establish a procedure for warning a practitioner when evidence is presented that his practice or conduct is bordering on the unethical or improper.

**4.** Expel from the associations any member who is found guilty of any practice or conduct that is condemned by the associations.

**5.** Develop and execute a full scale public information program to inform business, industry and government of the positive values of public relations, not neglecting, however, to make clear the stand of the associations against all forms of malpractice.

In executing these five steps the professional associations might declare a moratorium on idealistic statements. Our inventory of this commodity is bulging. However, the associations should be willing to state publicly and repeatedly with conviction that their members have banded together in the hope of doing more good than harm and of doing it well.

Until the time comes that membership in a professional public relations association carries the equivalent of license to practice, any actions taken by the associations against the unethical and unscrupulous practitioner of public relations is not likely to deter him.

The profession of public relations and its practitioners cannot leave

the matter of ethics, conduct, and morals to chance. Public relations men and their associations must begin immediately to take the responsibility for guiding the profession in the right direction.

Theodore Roosevelt has said: "Every man owes part of his time and money to upbuilding of the industry in which he is engaged." Let every public relations practitioner act on these words now. ●

* * *

### NEW PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL

pr welcomes the appearance of "Public Relations in Canada," the new periodical of the Canadian Public Relations Society, Inc. The editor is Ben Viccari, Box 264, Terminal "A," Toronto, Ontario.

* * *

### TV OR NOT TV?

Ignorance was less troublesome, Artemus Ward said, long ago, than "people's knowing so much that ain't so." A recent study designed to measure the simple impact of an advertising campaign recently provided clear-cut evidence of the extent to which people's memories may distort or even falsify their original perceptions.

The study took place in several test markets where a new product was being introduced. In each of these markets different media were used to announce the product. Successive waves of interviews (with different but comparable groups of people) were made to determine how fast knowledge of the new product was spreading. A primary purpose of the study was to determine how long the introductory campaign should run when the product was marketed nationally—but, as is often the case, other significant facts came to light at the same time.

The technique was to ask the respondents if they had seen or heard of "any new development or new product in (such-and-such a) field." If they said they had, they were asked to describe the new thing. Those—and only those—who successfully described it were *then* asked how or where they first heard about it or saw it.

In Test Market X, the group able to make positive identification of the product grew at a gratifying rate. On the first wave of interviewing, 7 per cent said they had heard about the product over the radio, and 3 per cent named television. Thereafter:

Four weeks later, only 3 per cent said they had heard about the product on radio, but the group naming television had grown to 9 per cent.

Six weeks later, the radio figure held firm at 3 per cent, but the television figure had risen to 17 per cent.

What makes such figures remarkable is this: *At no time in this market was television used to promote the product at all.* Accurate though their knowledge of the product was, and vivid though their impressions of it were, substantial numbers of people were not merely ignorant of how they had gained their knowledge—they had positive and mistaken ideas of how it had come to them.

These figures show the power of television, and also the exaggeration of that power. Television plays such an all-consuming role in many people's lives that they tend to see it as the source of experience actually gained elsewhere. But the figures also demonstrate a universal human tendency to remember, not actual experience, but experience as fitting into the frameworks people carry around with them to organize what would otherwise be an overwhelmingly diffuse collection of sensations. Here must be a major cause for the way in which people cling to old, irrelevant ideas about people, politics, and products. And it illustrates a key research point: that without an understanding of how people's *general* ways of looking at things operate on the *specific* information being imparted, communication may be so incomplete as to be worthless.

—*From* THE PUBLIC PULSE, *Elmo Roper and Associates, March, 1958.*

# scanning

# *THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS*

*Each quarter Dr. Donald W. Krimel selects items from the various professional journals in the social sciences which have implications for the public relations field.*—Ed.

## IDENTIFYING THE "IDEA MAN"

"Originality in Relation to Personality and Intellect," by FRANK BARRON, Institute of Personality Assessment and Research, University of California, Berkeley, Calif., *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 25, No. 6 (Duke University Press, Durham, N. C.)

Probably no aspect of administration calls so strongly for the "idea man," the person of "originality," as does public relations. The quality of originality is so hard to define, and so hard to discern, however, that there has been little formal attempt to analyze it.

The whole matter of originality can be almost embarrassing in public relations staffing. The highly original personality type, the artistic sort, may not be considered appropriate scenery in a public relations office. A popular stereotype has it, in fact, that the public relations man is orthodoxy itself (he has the Ivy League look and the Madison Avenue Patter)

Yet against that background the public relations executive has a need to produces and to hire persons who can produce relatively original ideas. Unless he has at hand the quality of originality in grand supply, probably "brainstorming" will be no more than the whipping of dead horses, and his activities will lack verve.

From Barron's report it might be deduced that the analysis and recognition—even the toleration—of the quality of originality may require a strong, conscious effort, a sort of shifting of gears, by many an employer. In his more extreme form the creative person is "both more primitive and more cultured, more destructive and more constructive, occasionally crazier and yet adamantly saner, than the average person."

Barron believes that the quality of originality exists to some extent in each of us, *Effectively* original persons are, usually, highly intelligent. When a high degree of originality appears in a less than exceptionally intelligent person, often it is accompanied by personality traits which make him hard to like.

The person who is both original and very bright, however, probably manages to live in two worlds. He "may be characterized above all by an ability to regress very far *for the moment* while being able quite rapidly to return to a high degree of rationality, bringing with him the fruits of his regression to primitive and fantastic modes of thought." Barron theorizes that perhaps where intelligence is high "the ego realizes that it can afford to allow regression—because it can correct itself." He seems thus to equate low intelligence with personality weakness and both of them with a fearful unwillingness to allow the mind to wander into fantasy, unorthodoxy, and—possibly—useful originality.

## SOCIAL SCIENTISTS ANALYZE THREE PUBLIC OPINION PROBLEM SITUATIONS

"Three Flash Studies in Intercultural Communication," by IVAN D. LONDON, Brooklyn College, and MIRIAM B. LONDON, Inwood Institute, *Psychological Reports,* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Southern Universities Press, Box 11, Grand Forks, N. D.)

Many people look upon the social sciences as being objective in an absolute sense. In practice the social scientist strives toward absolute objectivity in his research, but often settles for less.

The three studies reported here deal with what the authors call examples of "rapid current analysis at a distance." The studies explore the following topics: (a) the meaning of an unusual crowd formation in Leningrad on the occasion of a visit by a British flotilla, (b) the effect on a Soviet audience of a broadcast by a Soviet official over the Voice of America, and (c) the consistent knowledgeableness of the ex-Soviet citizen as contrasted with other so-called "Russian experts."

*The Leningrad Reception of British Sailors:* In October, 1955, over a million Russians turned out to greet a flotilla of British warships which sailed into the port of Leningrad on a friendly visit. The intense, friendly interest, amounting to unrestrained enthusiasm, displayed by the crowds to sailors who walked off these ships has been called phenomenal by observers *(N. Y. Times,* 10/14/55).

Analysis, based on intensive interviews with former Soviet citizens, indicates that the startling reaction resulted from (a) the fact that the visiting group was novel: non-communist, non-political; and (b) official approval of friendly welcome, in line with the new policy at the time of presenting a friendlier face to the West; and (c) emotion, which "may have been fired by the intensity of unexpressed hopes."

*The Matskevich Broadcast over the Voice of America:* In the summer of 1955 a Soviet delegation, headed by Vladimir V. Matskevich, arrived in the United States to make an invited tour of America. The tour was capped by an invitation, extended to Matskevich, to address the Soviet people over the Voice of America.

The "flashy study" reported here indicated strongly that allowing Matskevich to so speak was a major propaganda error. The *content* of the speech was not the significant element.

To Russians the fact that Matskevich was allowed to make the talk indicated present or possible agreement and cooperation, to one degree or another, between the Soviet government and the United States. This caused serious reduction in Russians' faith that they would be protected by the U. S. if they deserted to the West or otherwise opposed the Soviet regime. What the researchers found out, and what our policy-makers apparently did not understand, is that "there is (among Russians who consider opposing the regime) a constant fear that the American government, whenever expedient will come to an understanding with the Soviet regime and, in effect, abandon the cause of freedom of the Russian people."

*Contrasting "Expert" Opinions about Russia:* Existence of groups representing two schools of thought about relationships between the Soviet regime and the Russian people was determined, and the predictions of the groups about general and specific developments in the Soviet Union were observed in relation to what subsequently happened. One group, made up of former Soviet citizens, was found to be consistently correct in its predictions, the other group consistently incorrect. The significance of such a finding, as it might apply in the establishment of an advisory group for foreign information program policy, is apparent.

In these three analyses of problem situations in the public opinion area, the authors made use of panels of expert respondents, rather than guessing. The principle might be useful in any organization's development of machinery for intelligent determination of public relations policy on major issues. ●

D.W.K.

*The Impact of Government on*

# PR PRACTICE

*By* THOMAS W. MILES

GOVERNMENT actions at the federal, state and local levels increasingly are intruding in the day-to-day activities of those who work in public relations. Here, for example, are some recent developments which can have far-reaching consequences:

- Public relations and advertising men may have to be registered in Washington as lobbyists if their work is interpreted as influencing legislation.
- Certain types of institutional advertising—if held to influence legislation even indirectly "by subtle means"—may not be deductible as a business expense for tax purposes.
- The Baltimore tax on advertising is an idea that is spreading among tax-hungry state and municipal officials. A number of threats have been made to impose features of it, although they have not gotten very far.
- Public relations men and other professionals practicing independently may be able to make limited deductions for money set aside in old age pension plans.

The idea of pinning the dubious label of "lobbyist" on public relations men is contained in a bill (S. 2191) introduced by Senator John L. McClellan of Arkansas. Senator McClellan is chairman of the Senate Government Operations Committee and was chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Political Activities, Lobbying and Campaign Contributions.

Senator McClellan's bill is aimed chiefly at disclosure, that is, at identifying the persons and their interests who—and quite properly so—seek to influence legislation, as that pursuit is defined in the act. The professional full-time lobbyist, who often blandly identifies himself as a "public relations consultant" would be obliged under the McClellan bill to file

with the Comptroller General a statement showing, among other things, who has retained him, what he is being paid, and what legislation he is interested in. Criminal penalties are prescribed for failure. Others, as distinguished from the professional lobbyists, would also be required to file quarterly statements of disclosure but would not be subject to criminal penalties.

The bill is pending in the Senate Government Operations Committee. No action is expected, however, until the Senate takes up again the whole matter of lobbying. Representative Lester R. Johnson (D., Wis.) has a similar bill (H.R. 9664) in the House.

In Washington the term "lobbyist" is not the smear it is in some parts of the country. It is understood here and in most State Capitols as an important and necessary function in the constitutional right to petition elected representatives. Even so, the term is still subject to use as invective in politics. For that reason some public relations men are understandably loath to be registered.

***Use of Taxing Power***

But a far more serious development is the Government's resort to its taxing power, not merely to get revenue but to limit the measures that citizens may take to get an adequate hearing for their views. In that connection, the Internal Revenue Service has pending a proposed regulation under the 1954 Code which states:

"Expenditures for lobbying purposes, for the promotion or defeat of legislation, for political purposes, or for the development or exploitation of propaganda (including advertising other than trade advertising) relating to any of the foregoing purposes are not deductible from gross income. No payment made, either directly or through any organization for the specific purpose of attempting to promote or defeat legislation shall be deductible. . . ."

Senator William Langer (R., N. D.) has a bill (S. 3074) which would make this regulation the law. It is pending before the Senate Finance Committee.

Although the Bureau held hearings on this proposal and printed it January 21, 1956 in the *Federal Register* which publishes administrative regulations, the possibilities and implications in such words as "propaganda" and "poltical purposes" were not noticed until last fall. Then the Public Relations Society of America and the Advertising Federation of America raised the question in Washington with the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service. As a result both professional groups have hopes

that the regulation may be modified.

PRSA submitted a new draft which, the Society told the Treasury, removed "all words or phrases that are incapable of precise definition and subject to very broad interpretation and that could severely penalize business." PRSA further commented:

"It is believed that this new draft would prohibit deduction of expenditures for lobbying, as defined by the Supreme Court, and all political contributions as allowable expense. But it should not permit the disallowance of any legitimate advertising and informational activities that corporations deem essential to their survival.

"Even under the draft attached, corporations and business will be under a disadvantage in defending the enterprise system from attacks as compared to such tax-exempt organizations as trade unions, the cooperatives, foundations and others. However, the disadvantage imposed on business under this draft would be much less serious than the potentially extreme dangers that could possibly result from some interpetations of the draft as originally proposed by the Internal Revenue Service."

***Internal Revenue Policies***

Although the IRS protested to **pr** that there is nothing new in the proposed regulation that has not been in effect for 10 or 15 years in the regulations under the old code and that no new interpretations are planned, there are indications that the Bureau's interests are broadening. In a Staff Memorandum in the report of Senator McClellan's Special Committee there is this observation:

"The business-expense deduction is denied expenditures for the purpose of influencing legislation, but the Bureau of Internal Revenue appears in recent years to have confined most of its proceedings to cases involving either a taint of illegality or an illegal business."

In the event of any change in the Bureau's cases, the wording of the proposed regulation will be important. In its final report, Senator McClellan's Special Committee suggested as "worthy of special attention" by the Bureau "newspaper and magazine advertisements by varied interests which do not expressly support or oppose legislation but tend to accomplish the same result indirectly *by subtle means,* the cost of which is also treated as a business expense." (Italics supplied.)

It was only February that Commissioner Russell C. Harrington of IRS advised Senator Estes Kefauver (D., Tenn.) that IRS refused to permit a group of electric companies to deduct the cost of a number of ads. Senator Kefauver charged that the ads were "propaganda" and urged IRS

to take action. His comment on Commissioner Harrington's letter is typical of those who would hobble the institutional advertising that they call "propaganda." He said:

"They can continue to propagandize as much as they want in their advertisements—they are merely going to have to pay the bill themselves."

***Federal Power Commission Ruling***

About a year ago the Federal Power Commission ruled on a pamphlet and a booklet that some electric companies put out to present their side of the case in defense against public power. The FPC said it could not be charged to operating expenses which go into the formation of the rate structure for charges against consumers. At the same time the Commission noted that the expenses of the pamphlet were so small in relation to the overall operating expenses that as a practical matter it could not have had any significant effect on rates.

The two publications were brought up in hearings of the Public Works and Resources Subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee which produced a strongly worded report containing an equally strongly worded minority report. The FPC ruling came as a result of the Committee majority's recommendations.

The minority charged the majority with issuing "outrageous pamphlets of political bias." It declared:

"There is not the slightest reason for Congress to investigate the content of promotional material put out by an organization or group in its efforts to get its views before Government leaders, as long as they violate no existing postal regulations or lobbying laws. The matter of free speech, free press, and the right to petition is definitely involved."

At the local and state levels, however, the attacks on advertising are not so much to control it as to tap it as a source of tax revenue. Baltimore actually levied a city tax of 4% on the cost of advertising space and time and a tax of 2% on the media receipts from the advertising. But the Maryland Legislature passed a law late in February preventing cities and counties in the State from singling out advertising for special taxation. It will become effective next January 1. In the meantime there are 16 suits pending against the City of Baltimore in an effort to invalidate the tax for the current year.

***Repercussions of Baltimore Plan***

The evil of the Baltimore tax idea lives on, however. The idea has since cropped up in St. Louis, Norfolk, Woonsocket, R. I., West Virginia

and Florida. In none of these did the idea get as far as it did in Baltimore, but the point is that it does have appeal to tax hungry officials and it will have to be fought time and again.

In Norfolk the Mayor recommended passage of a bill in the Virginia Legislature to empower cities to levy a business license tax of 0.3% on ad income of newspapers and TV stations. The biennial session of the Legislature closed, however, without the bill being submitted.

In St. Louis it was an alderman who threatened last November to submit the Baltimore plan. That threat never materialized. And in Woonsocket the President of the City Council, over the objections of the Mayor, proposed a 3 and ¾% levy along the lines of the Baltimore tax. His ordinance was withdrawn for revision and was not resubmitted.

The West Virginia Legislature put a bill for a 2% sales tax on advertising through the House. It was killed in the Senate. Next year when the Florida Legislature meets it is expected to have before it a proposal for a 3% State tax on newspaper, radio and television advertising. The proposal itself is well advertised and the opposition is well organized.

In this connection some excellent material has been prepared by the American Association of Advertising Agencies for use in fighting these local tax proposals.

### *Help for the Self-Employed*

At the personal level the self-employed in public relations have a stake in a bill that would give them an annual deduction for Federal income tax purposes of 10% of self-employment up to $5,000. Increased deductions would be permitted for persons now 50 years or older who have fewer years to build up a retirement fund.

The measure, which is known as the Jenkins-Keogh Bill (identical bills, H. R. 9 and 10) is being pushed by the American Thrift Assembly. There is a fair chance that the House Ways and Means Committee, which is the tax-writing committee, may include its provisions in a tax bill if a general tax cut measure is reported out. But the Treasury is opposed to the idea on the ground that it may stand to lose $10 million in revenues.●

* * *

### *THE VILLAIN IN THE PIECE*

"The book *(Don't Go Near the Water)* was little more than a routine series of digs at (1) the questionable merits of public relations in general . . ."

*—Newsweek*

"The public relations mind: An attractive girl was seen prancing around the food chains convention with a sign that said she was 'Miss Pel-Freeze Frozen Rabbit Meat 1957.'"

*—Washington Daily News*

# BOOK REVIEWS

**FICTION AND THE UNCONSCIOUS**
*By* SIMON LESSER
*Beacon Press, Boston:* 1957, 322 pp., $4.95

**MADISON AVENUE: U.S.A.**
*By* MARTIN MAYER
*Harper & Bros., New York:* 1958, 332 pp., $5.00

If America, in a familiar cliche, is a nation of joiners, it is also a nation of pleaders. The mass media are virtually choked with messages beamed at a variety of publics. Driving for an efficiency that would conserve effort and heighten audience acceptance, communicators have compiled thousands of lists of presumed opinion leaders, consulted with social scientists, flirted with subliminal projection, and enthroned Dr. Dichter. The question they ask is a huge one: what is likely to attract audience attention and what is likely to keep it and what appeals help to maintain interest and achieve a sympathetic reaction?

Some perhaps are conscious of another kind of question: how ethical are advanced persuasion techniques? and what kind of needs does advertising and public relations copy satisfy? or create? Answers to both kinds of questions may be found in strange beds: (1) a psychologist's view of fiction, and (2) a reporter's look at Madison Avenue.

Advertising and public relations are not, to be sure, concerned directly with fiction; they have nevertheless a vast common ground. They have a story to tell; they work at "the ordering of what in most minds is disordered." And there are some important lessons to be gained from understanding why man cheats the harsh demands of daily existence to tell and listen to stories. What satisfactions are derived from fiction, in whatever form? How does fiction provide these satisfactions? What happens to us as we read or listen to stories? What effect does fiction have on us? These are the questions to which psychologist Simon Lesser addresses himself in *Fiction and the Unconscious.* The answers are provocative.

Initially, two misconceptions need correction. First, reading is a pos-

itive undertaking: we do not read fiction to "escape." Rather, we seek both emotional outlets which normally we tend to deny ourselves and ways to cope with anxieties and guilt feelings that much of our experience engenders. In fiction, we look for an explanation of the reality which in Aldous Huxley's words strikes us too often as "just a series of paradoxes and non-sequitors."

Secondly, fiction is likely to be a good deal stranger than truth, simply because our views of reality are invariably colored by our own subconscious motivations. These tendencies were sensed by writers and critics long before Freud's discoveries. Some 2,000 years ago, Aristotle realized that fiction achieves "an imaginary world more life-like than life itself, more directly and honestly concerned with essential problems, more supple in its expression of every aspect of man's nature, less burdened by distracting irrelevancies."

What then is there about fiction—a novel, a play, a TV or radio drama—that enables it to satisfy people's needs? Several characteristics stand out. Primarily, fiction deals with emotional problems, not directly or specifically, but in images. Nevertheless they are concrete problems, whether in the feelings and conflicts of Kafka's *The Trial* or in Robinson Crusoe's real-life problems of wresting a living from an unfriendly environment. But Lesser emphasizes strongly that "such material must be handled with particular skill or it will seem offensive and arouse anxiety and painful impresions. But the converse is also true: *material with no real reference to the human predicament can be presented with the utmost skill and it will seem vacuous and inconsequential.*" (Italics added)

Characteristically, fiction is also compromising. The pro and con, the repressed and the repressing forces, the demands of pleasure and reality are all reconciled. Fiction by its very nature redresses balances; it arrives at fuller solutions than we encounter in real life. This is not the happy-ending solution of the soap opera, but the solution of working out the complexities of emotional drives. In fiction, we carry to an extreme "what we have not dared to carry halfway, and it does not mistake cowardice for good sense or tolerate self-deception."

Because of its basic subject matter, fiction affects the personality of the reader in a number of ways and consequently may be enormously appealing. Reading fiction, for example, permits a sharing and a relieving of guilt. We are able to disassociate our feelings and transfer impulses and drives from one object to another. We can, in psychoanalytic terms, displace them. And as a result of displacement "feelings which properly

identified, would arouse abhorrence, secure open . . . expression." In short, fiction involves us emotionally but at a distance. We can identify with a character and repudiate him at will; we can test the gratification of impulses and drives and sense their consequences without guilt or anxiety. Or, as we read along, we can spin out parallel events and situations that are more suited to the circumstances of our own emotional and physical environment.

But if fiction is composed of words, it also "quickly and effectively transmits almost any kind of material without requiring the reader to put what he understands into words." Thus a description in words becomes a series of images and impressions. The words are triggers; imagination does the rest. Simultaneously, fiction "telescopes time," in Lesser's words. The events of reality develop slowly, oftentimes so leisurely that we are unable to trace connections and comprehension wanes. But fiction enables us to overcome the limitations of the senses and memory and helps us see and appreciate events that might take decades to unfold. Fiction's ability to detour around words together with its abbreviation of time permits us to gain experience economically.

Obviously, some fiction displays none of these attributes and involves us only superficially, if at all. These stories, like comedy and wit, we view as spectators only. And "comedy also minimizes the seriousness of the situation in which its characters become involved."

Altogether, then, a number of rules about fiction and our response to it can be inferred from some of Lesser's statements:

> We read to "secure pleasure or at any rate relief from painful tension and assuage feelings of anxiety and guilt."
>
> "The extent to which various interpretations of experience proffered by fiction are consulted, understood, enjoyed and accepted depends in no small measure upon the readers' emotional needs."
>
> "All the satisfactions we secure from all forms of fiction save comedy are a product of our participant . . . reactions."
>
> "Fiction provides combinations of satisfactions which are seldom possible in life itself."
>
> "We turn to fiction primarily to satisfy desires inadequately gratified through our experience, desires which in most cases we do not acknowledge and are unaware we entertain."

Lesser has surely not written a "guide for comunicators." Yet his treatment of the appeals and responses to fiction suggest several avenues of exploration. Because individual emotional needs are so important to

reader selection, satisfaction and involvement, it is entirely possible that communicators are not now tailoring their messages well enough for particular audiences. Other observers have discovered for example, as Lesser infers, that sex differences are one of the consistently important variables in audience acceptance. Finally, because of its hit-and-run effects and inability to involve the reader below the superficial level, comedy and wit may not be an effective vehicle for messages that are intended to teach.

But where *Fiction and the Unconscious* makes a positive contribution to communications by skirting the pond, Martin Mayer's *Madison Avenue, U. S. A.* jumps in bodily, setting up some disturbing swells. For if Mayer has any message it seems to be that it's fun to be fooled, and the signs are that he has a winner on his hands.

Largely, *Madison Avenue, U. S. A.* is a highly readable book; informative, gossipy, knowledgeable. It is also a worshipful book. Mayer is obviously intrigued with the "creativity" of the Ogilivy's, (Ogilivy, Benson and Mather), the Bateses (Ted Bates) and a host of others who have parlayed eye patches, shaggy dogs and dressed-in-Italy male models into multimillion dollar businesses. And *Madison Avenue, U. S. A.* is an annoying book. For if Mayer has drawn any image of advertising from 290 pages on copy themes, media, testing (especially interesting for public relations people) and who does what and to whom in the cubicles along Madison Avenue, it is of the blind leading (and kidding) the blind. Advertising sells, but it cannot be certain how nor, despite an infinite variety of research techniques, can it tie the ad dollar to the sales dollar any closer than John Wanamaker was able to generations ago: "I know half the money I spend on advertising is wasted," he said, "but I can never find out which half."

Still, Mayer would like to justify advertising, and for that justification he has had to invent a fall guy. What Mayer seems to be saying is that advertising isn't really so bad; you ought to see public relations. "Advertising," he writes, "for all its faults, is a relatively open business; its messages appear in paid space or on bought time, and everybody can recognize it as special pleading. Public Relations works behind the scenes . . . "; seeks to direct and if necessary distort the media's supposedly undirected and undistorted content . . . The advertising man must know how many people he can reach *with* the media, the public relations how many people he can reach *within* the media.

Aside from Mayer's theory of the reachability of the media, he has exhibited an appalling ignorance of public relations and some basic concepts. Among them is the fairly fundamental proposition that publicity,

which seems to be what Mayer is talking about, is not made, but that it is news that gets attention, as any city desk man will attest. That public relations is concerned with "visible" media and that it was product advertising that first came up with "invisible" subliminal projection seems to have escaped Mayer entirely.

Finally, advertising's greatest contribution is that it "adds a new value to the existing value of the product." If there is no difference between two identical products and if advertising has made the consumer think one is better than the other, then value has been added. The old dope peddler never had it so good.

Journalistically, *Madison Avenue, U. S. A.* is fine; ideologically, it is nonsense. And it is unfortunate that a workmanlike job had to be marred in its final pages by distortions.

* * *

**A PUBLIC RELATIONS BIBLIOGRAPHY**

*By* SCOTT M. CUTLIP.

*The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1957.* 313 pages, plus xvii, $5.00.

*Reviewed by Melvin Brodshaug, Dean, Boston University School of Public Relations and Communications.*

Public relations takes on new professional stature with this significant compilation of selected references. The volume will be extremely valuable to all who are entering upon work in public relations and to all executives who want to explore the field with the greatest economy of time.

Part I is a comprehensive survey of information sources on public relations. This section includes other bibliographies on public relations, the various indexes which list public relations titles, periodicals which regularly carry public relations articles, professional public relations organizations, and finally a list of such organizations abroad.

The second part, and really the main body, of the book is an excellent annotated bibliography of books, pamphlets, and periodical articles. The annotations are extremely helpful both in evaluating the articles and in offering a clue as to their scope and content. The author considers the bibliography complete through 1955, which was the original cut-off date, and less complete through 1956. This portion of the bibliography is arranged logically according to major subject areas which are listed in the table of contents. There are approximately eighty of these subheadings. Further assistance in locating references is provided by the index at the end of the volume, which lists authors, articles, and subjects alphabetically.

The third section of the book is a guide to selected films on public relations. This, too, is arranged according to logical categories and each film listed has a comprehensive description, including such additional information as length, sponsor, source, and cost for purchase or rental.

The book represents work on the part of the author and his assistants extending over several years, but sponsorship by the Public Relations Society of America assured its final publication. **pr** is not listed among the professional journals in Part I, but articles contained in the early issues are indexed. Errors and omissions are present, but these are insignificant in relation to the magnitude of the effort that went into this production. ●

## SOCIAL SCIENCE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

*A Survey and an Analysis of Social Science Literature Bearing Upon the Practice of Public Relations*
*By* REX F. HARLOW, *Harper & Brothers, New York, 1957.* 198 pages.
*Reviewed by Donald W. Krimel,*
*Associate Professor of Public Relations, University of Maryland*

Social science research is increasingly complex. The public relations man, who would like to understand and make use of it, seldom has the time or the background necessary to keep up with it. Can a bridge be built between? This book is a bridge-building effort. Probably it does not add much to the reader's ability to understand the social scientists, their techniques and their language. It does, however, transmit in highly simplified form some of the results of their researches of recent years.

Dr. Harlow's book, like his *Social Science Reporter* and like the "Scanning the Professional Journals" section in **pr**, selects and paraphrases material from the reports of research social scientists. This kind of bridge-building no doubt is a service to the public relations practitioner, and surely it whets his interest in the social sciences. We can hardly depend on it, however, to bring into being the public relations man who "understands the social sciences" and who is equipped to be "selective and analytical in drawing upon the scientific stockpile." To find him in considerable supply, we may have to think in terms of another generation. But, to the bridge-building effort of today, Dr. Harlow's book is an important, valuable, promising contribution. ●

# IN AND ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Public relations as we know it is a 20th Century phenomenon. Yet the modern practitioners can benefit from a look backwards at some of the figures of history who understood the meaning of public opinion in a highly sophisticated manner. Such a person was Samuel Adams, whose spectacular successes in this field are described by **Edwin C. Kepler** (page 1). The hand of Associate Editor Kepler has been in every part of **pr** since its inception. Much of the progress we have made has been due to his skillful editing and analytical mind, yet this is the first time he has appeared as an author in his own right. Mr. Kepler is Public Issues Analyst in the Public & Employee Relations Services Communication Operation of the General Electric Company in New York. Previously he was in the Public Relations Department of the Sun Oil Company in Philadelphia. He holds a Master's degree in Economics from the University of Arizona and subsequently was a Roberts Fellow at Columbia University.

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**Joe Jones** (page 9) is one of the pioneers in the burgeoning international public relations field. (See "International Networks: PR's New Golden Age, by David L. Lewis, October, 1957). Mr. Jones is President of Reed-Jones, New York, originally organized in 1946 as Export News Service of Chicago. He got into export work with the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, now the Automobile Manufacturers Asosciation. Later he was chief of the automotive division of the Board of Economic Warfare. A unique feature of Reed-Jones is that, except for representing foreign governments in the United States, it does not engage in public relations activities in America. Current clients include Remington Rand, Merck, Sharp & Dohme International, Bristol Myers and Caribbean Networks. Mr. Jones is also chairman of the International Relations Committee of APRA.

* * *

In the October issue **Hal D. Steward** gave his views on the qualifying of public relations practitioners through examinations. In this issue (page 18) he examines the vexing problem of ethics, and comes up with a five point program of recomendations. Lt. Colonel Steward currently is Chief, Community Relations Branch, Office of the Chief of Information, Department of the Army, Washington D. C. He has had broad PR experience in and out of the service, and has lectured at such universities as Boston University, George Washington, Babson Institute and Nippon, Japan. His various Army assignments have taken him to both Europe and the Far East, including a tour as PR officer on General MacArthur's staff in World War II. He and the First Cavalry Division have an affinity for each other: he served with them as PIO in World War II, in the occupation of Japan, and in the first year of the Korean War. Colonel Steward has an honorary Ph.D. from Fremont College. He has just joined **pr** as a Contributing Editor.

* * *

The various practitioners outside of Washington are naturally aware of the impact of government activities on their clients and organizations. Perhaps not as many realize that the field of public relations itself is often affected by legislative and departmental actions. **pr** has asked **Thomas W. Miles** to acquaint our readers with some examples demonstrating why perusal of the Washington scene should become a habit (page 27). Mr. Miles, who operates his own counseling firm in Washington, D. C., specializes in congressional hearings. Among his clients is the Council of State Chambers of Commerce. He is a native of New Jersey and a graduate of Princeton who worked for many years on Jersey daily newspapers, including the Newark Evening News. During World War II he served with the Military Intelligence Service.

* * *

**Don Colen,** Analyst in the Public & Employee Relations Communication Operation of the General Electric Company, makes his debut in this issue as Book Editor. While welcoming him we wish to thank **Dr. S. M. Vinocour** for his services in this position which he relinquishes to devote more time to his public relations counselling firm.

Two new regular features in this issue are **The Editors' Page** and **Further Comment.** The latter is an open forum of opinion on issues raised in the various articles in **pr.** All readers are invited to contribute.

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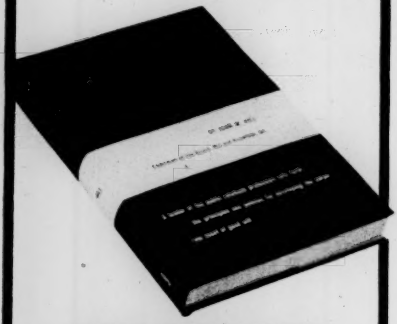

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